

KIT  
REVIEW

# Active

**MARION  
BRUMSTEAD**  
builds Mount  
Fleet Models'  
Motor Tug

While hubby was busy building the review model of the Sealight, I was given the opportunity to review the Active, another kit from the same manufacturers, Mount Fleet Models. This attractive Motor Tug is scaled at 1:50 giving an overall length of 32ins and is designed with electric power in mind.

However, whilst building the model I had a couple of spells in hospital, which delayed completion of the kit and also meant hubby got his hands on it "to help!"

## In the box

To start - the kit arrived in its stout cardboard packaging and was unpacked and contents checked against the supplied parts list, Photo 1. A couple of interesting points to make here, the kit has a full size plan and the superstructure and wheelhouse (as well as the hull) are moulded in G.R.P., Photos 2 and 3. Some time was spent checking the white metal fittings, Photo 4, and there were one or two errors, for instance three left handed doors and one right handed, instead of two and two.

Mount Fleet were only too helpful in rectifying these minor errors. It must also be said that the quality of the white metal castings was very good. Before any construction took place the fittings were cleaned with a brass wire brush and primed with Halfords White Acrylic Primer. Using the colour photos supplied, some of the fittings received their finish colour and some, like the winch parts were assembled, Photo 5. These parts were put aside until later.

## Hull

Work now commenced on the hull. The first step was to manufacture a simple stand from the profiles supplied on the plan.

The hull was checked for any GRP 'pips' that sometimes get left behind after moulding. These are normally easily removed either with a sharp knife or a small file.

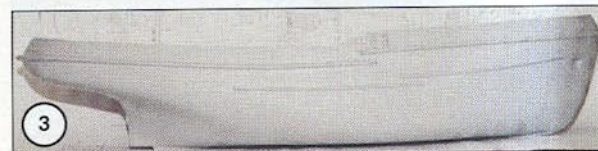
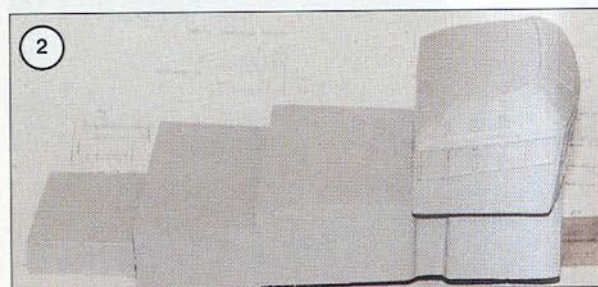
The skeg was offered into position and it became obvious that the keel was going to have to be filed down to allow the skeg to lie in the correct position relative to the other running gear components, Photo 6. The instructions stipulate filing down the keel, but with the skeg in the correct position there was still a substantial gap between the skeg and the prop. tube position. This hole was now drilled and the prop tube located. The keel was filed down a small amount further but the gap between the skeg and prop. tube was 1.5mm. To avoid taking more material off the keel, the prop tube to skeg fitting was packed with Plasticard spacer (1.5mm thick) which was eventually finished with fibreglass filler.

The Kort nozzle assembly was made up and fitted into place with the propeller fitted to ensure correct clearance, Photo 7. All the various parts were now Superglued in place, ready for finishing later.

## Running gear

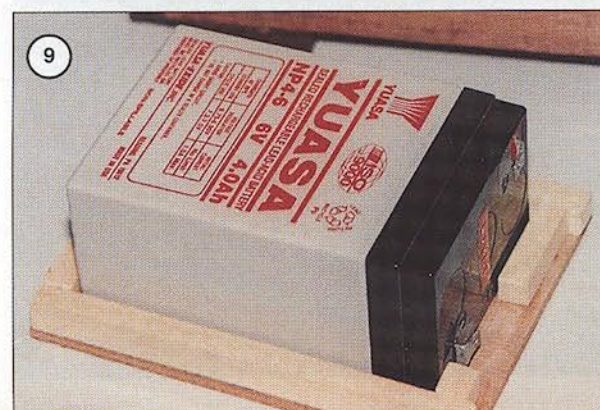
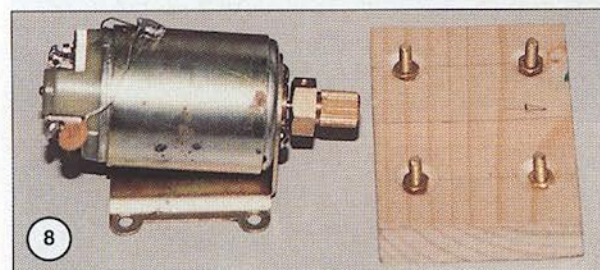
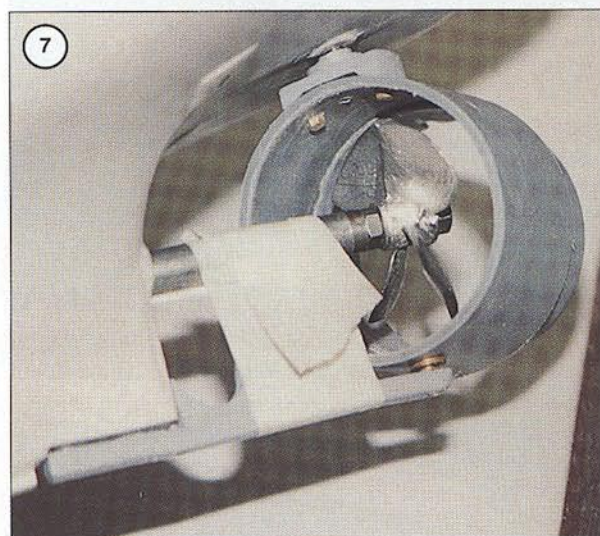
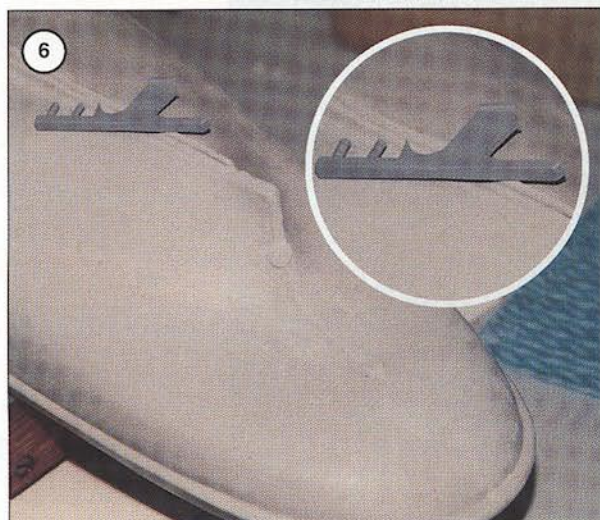
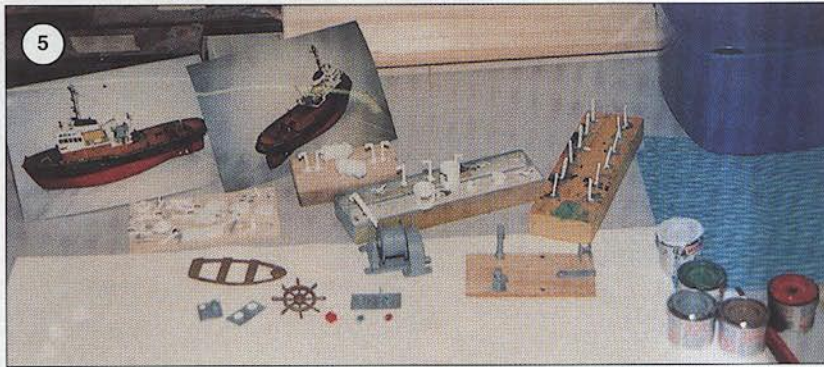
The next stage to tackle was the installation of an appropriate drive motor and battery. I 'borrowed' a Hunter motor from hubby (well he did say it would probably be the best for this model) and made up a suitable motor mount, Photo 8. The battery tray was also made at this time, Photo 9, to suit a Yuasa 6v. 4 amp. battery.

After lining up the motor, all the running gear components, motor mount, prop. shaft support etc. were now bonded in position using P38 fibreglass filler, Photo 10. Incidentally, the motor was suppressed before installation.



The hull cross member was cut to length and the centreline marked in position. The hull was marked as required and the two holes for the cross member support screws drilled. The wooden cross member was now screwed and glued in place. Using a piece of Plasticard as a gauge, the height of the top of the rubbing strip was transferred to the inside of the hull to give the position of the deck supports. These were formed from the plastic strip supplied. The first strip was stuck in place to the hull using thick superglue, and the





second strip stuck to the first with Revell Contacta Professional Plastic glue, Photo 11.

Before fitting the decks, the inside of the hull was painted with some surplus grey paint and the battery tray and motor installed. The rudder servo was also installed at this time. An off-cut of 18mm square wood was glued to the hull between the motor mount and battery tray and a Futaba servo mount screwed to it, Photo 12. The linkage to the tiller was made up and the system checked, Photo 13.

A piece of fibreglass sheet was screwed to the front edge of the battery tray to provide a mount for the speed controller and radio receiver. The radio battery was fitted onto the drive battery with Velcro.

## Decks

It was now time to make the decks. To prevent unnecessary errors, cardboard templates were made of each deck first and then transformed onto the ply supplied, Photo 14. Incidentally, the small square cut-out in the cardboard helps to line the centreline of the card to the centreline marked on the ply.

During this stage it was noted that the sides of the hull had different profiles, so the hull was

heated with a hairdryer and pulled into shape and held until cold.

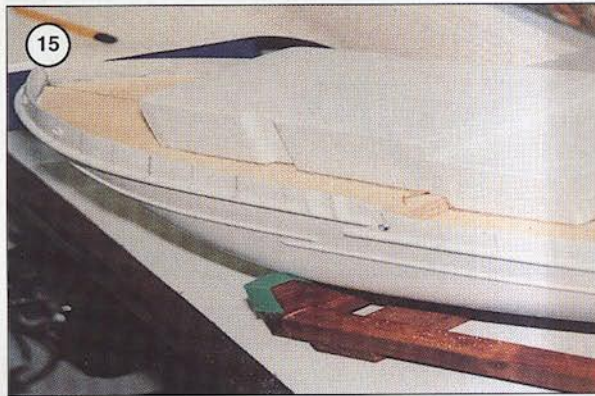
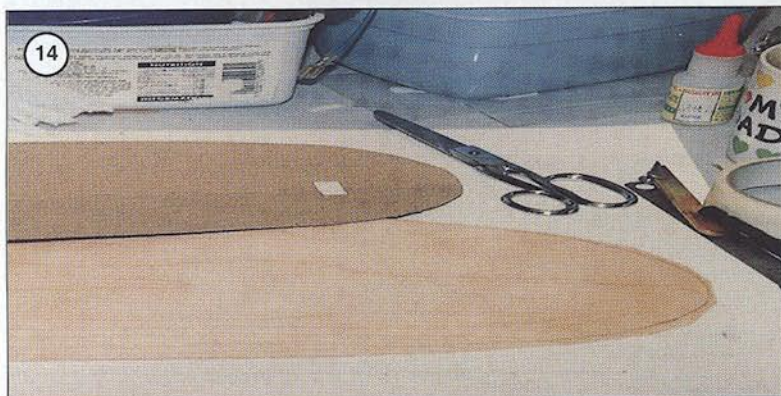
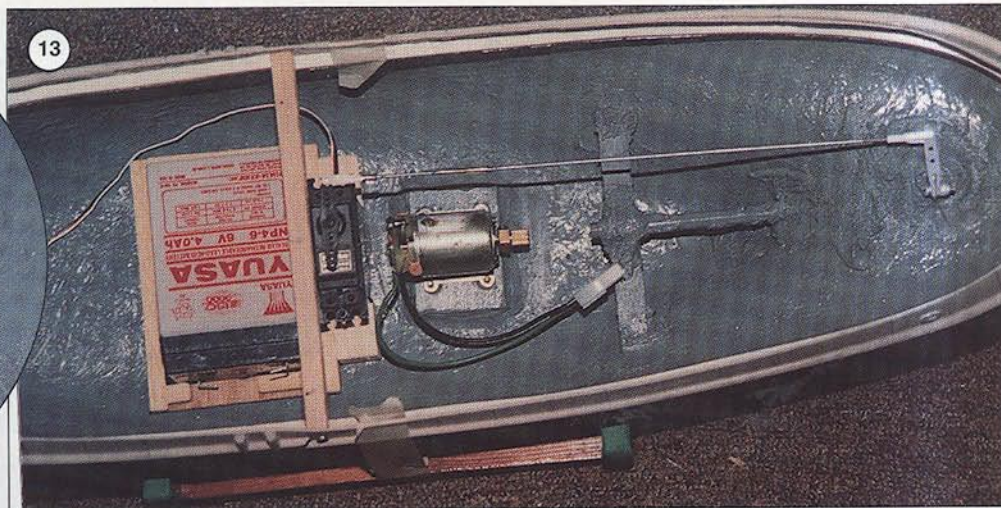
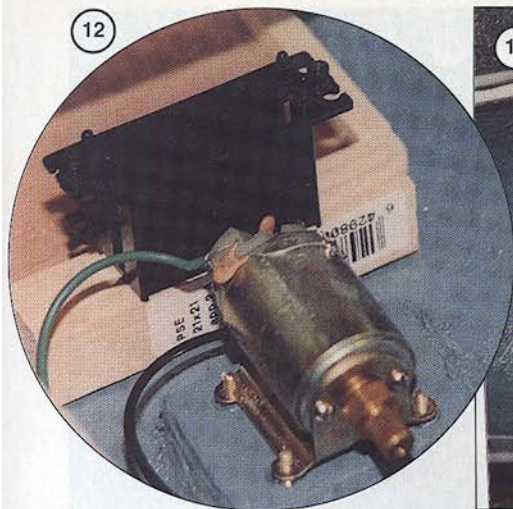
The decks were cut to shape and placed in position temporarily. The brass pins just visible in Photo 15 are holding the foredeck in place. The superstructure is placed in position and drawn around when satisfied that it is central to the hull/deck assembly.

The decks are now removed and the openings under the superstructure cut out. I offered the deck and superstructure into place several times to ensure accuracy. 3mm wood strip was glued to the edges on the underside of the decks to support the coamings, Photo 16.

The undersides of the deck are now treated with a couple of coats of primer and glued into place, using a combination of clamps and spring clips, Photo 17, and the coamings finished off. Incidentally, I decided to cut an access hole to get to the tiller at the rear of the main deck. P38 filler was used to get a smooth finish to the inside of the bulwarks. This was rubbed down when dry (a dusty job - do it outside) and filled again where necessary.

When a satisfactory finish had been obtained, a coat of paint was put on. This helps to show up any irregularities.





The deck was treated with fibreglass resin with filler added and rubbed down when dry. It was given a coat of white matt paint. The openings in the bulwarks were now opened to size. The holes for the bulwark supports were drilled 1mm, Photo 18. The capping strip was stuck in place following the guidance given in the instructions, Photo 19. The rear ply parts were too wide, so replacements were made from scrap material. The rear bulwarks had to be cut down to enable the rear ply parts to align with the capping rail, Photo 20. The capping strip and rear ply section were now sanded to shape.

The bulwark supports were now fitted. I used 1mm brass rod instead of the plastic covered steel supplied. The rearmost ones were left off to allow the rope rack to be removed to gain access to the tiller. The rope rack was made to fit at this time, Photo 21, and the hatch on the centre of the main deck made up as a Plasticard box, instead of solid wood as this was to be the position of the radio on - off switch, Photo 22.

### Painting

The entire hull/deck assembly were now sprayed with Halfords Red Primer. I gave the entire model four coats of paint, masking the hatch access, Photo 23. The boat was now masked to allow the foredeck to be sprayed (airbrush) with Humbrol 80, Matt Grass Green, Photo 24. When this was dry, the masking paper and tape was removed and the hull set up to mark the water-line.

It was immediately apparent that if the dimensions for the water-line were taken from the plans, the water-line would pass through the anchor recesses. From the photographs of the finished model supplied with the kit, this obviously was not the case. So after studying the plans and photos combined, I adjusted the water-line accordingly and using Hubby's drill stand with a pencil attached, Photo 25, I drew in the water-line.

The hull was now masked with a low tack tape (Tamiya) and covered with clean white paper (not newsprint - the ink may come off) and sprayed with Halfords Satin Black, Photo 26.

### Fittings

With the hull put to one side to allow the paint to dry thoroughly, the various deck fittings were made up, and where necessary given their finish paint colour. The samson posts were also made up from their various parts with the height being taken from the plan. As I had made such good progress with the hull and fittings up to this point, I decided to complete the hull.

The rest of the hull fittings, swan neck vents, bollards etc. were finished and the hull drilled as required for fitting. The anchor windlass was fitted with holes drilled in the deck to allow the anchor chain to pass through. The underside of the deck was sealed with silicone sealer to prevent any water getting in. Photo 27 shows the various fittings in place but close inspection will show a crazing effect to the paintwork caused by spraying acrylic varnish onto enamel! This error necessitated removing the fittings, rubbing the deck down and repainting.

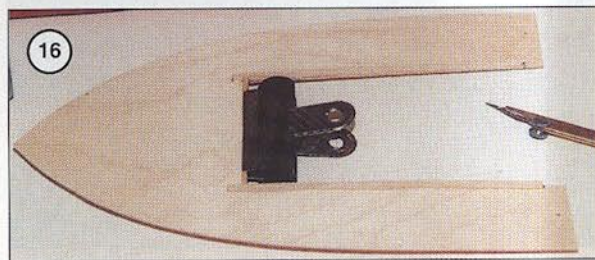
The fittings were now stuck in place on the main deck and the tow bows fabricated from 0.75mm Plasticard instead of the ply supplied. This was purely personal choice. The rearmost swan neck vents were also positioned slightly forward to allow the rope rack to be removed for access to the tiller, Photo 28.

With the tow bow painted and fitted into place, the man shelters were made and fitted with the lifebelts attached to them. The rope rack was stained and varnished.

### Superstructure

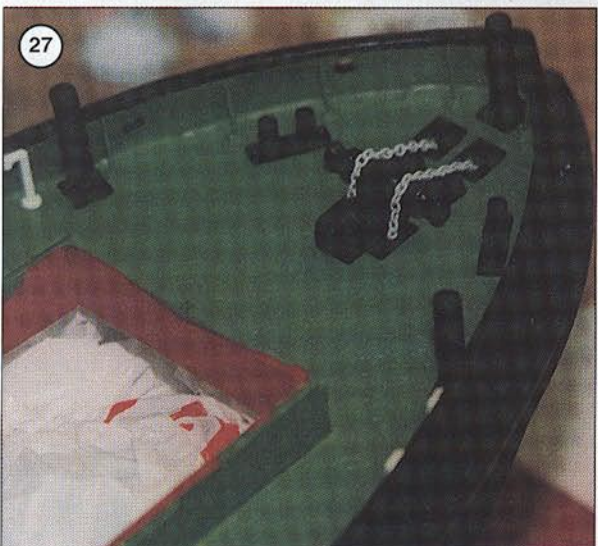
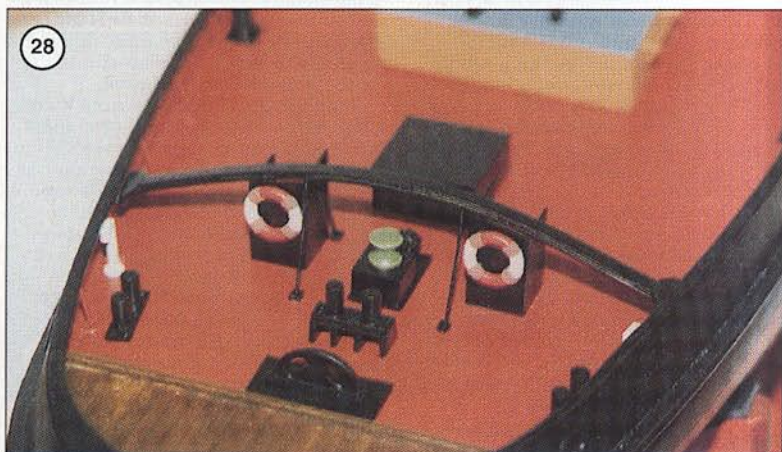
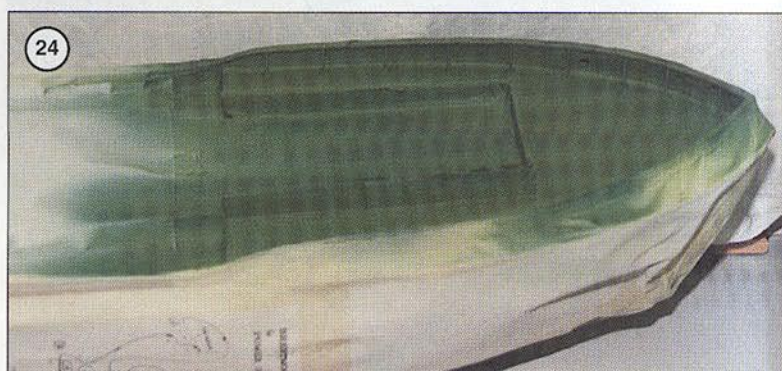
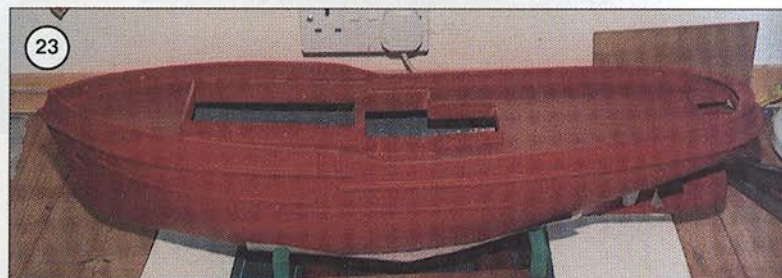
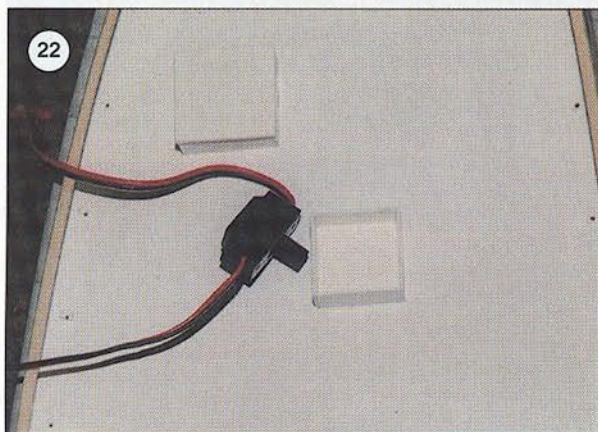
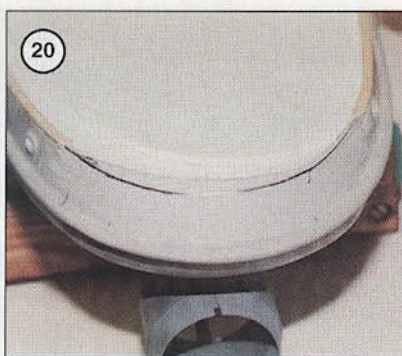
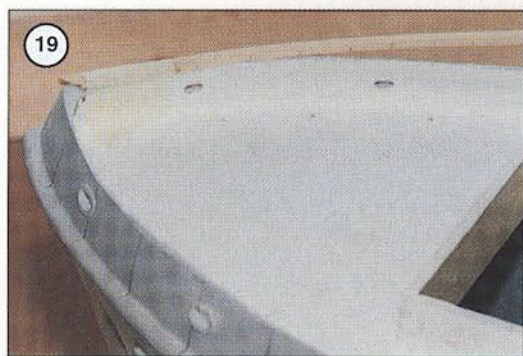
With the hull finished and put to one side, I turned my attention to the main superstructure. This only required a light clean up and a light rub down to remove the shine to give a key to the paint. The various hole positions were highlighted with a pencil and a 1mm pilot hole drilled. Where required, these holes were enlarged for the portholes.

The handrails were made from brass wire, instead of the material supplied, because I find brass is easier to work with. I also fitted the ladder plate at this time, after having checked the photos and the plan for position. The doors were also stuck in place, Photo 29. The entire superstructure was now painted with Humbrol 62 Matt Leather.



The decking for the superstructure was made from 1.5 mm plastic card in preference to the wood supplied. My reasons were very simple. Plastic card requires no preparation prior to painting. It doesn't require filling, priming or undercoating. It also represents steel far better than wood and is also easy to work with and glue.





So, with the decks cut to shape, they were painted Humbrol 80, Matt Grass Green, and put to one side until later.

Now it was time to tackle the wheelhouse. I didn't look forward to this bit so I enlisted hubby's help. The outline of the windows was emphasised with a pencil and the apertures chain drilled, Photo 30. The centres were then carefully removed, using a scalpel where required to join up the drilled holes. The windows were finished off with a selection of files. The navigation light boxes were cut from the vac forming and fitted behind the cut-outs on the wheelhouse.

The wheelhouse was now painted externally with Humbrol 130 Satin White and when finished, the interior was painted with Humbrol 89 Matt Middle Blue. The navigation light housings were painted Red and Green as appropriate and the navigation lights fitted.

The windows were glazed with the material supplied, and the dash panel made up, the instruments attached, and the whole

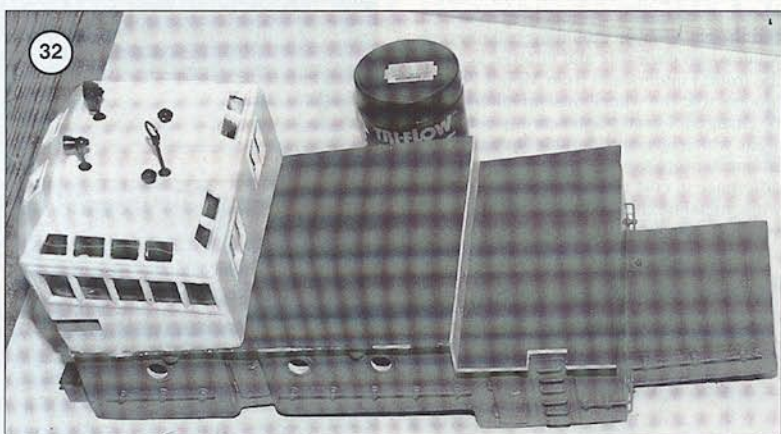
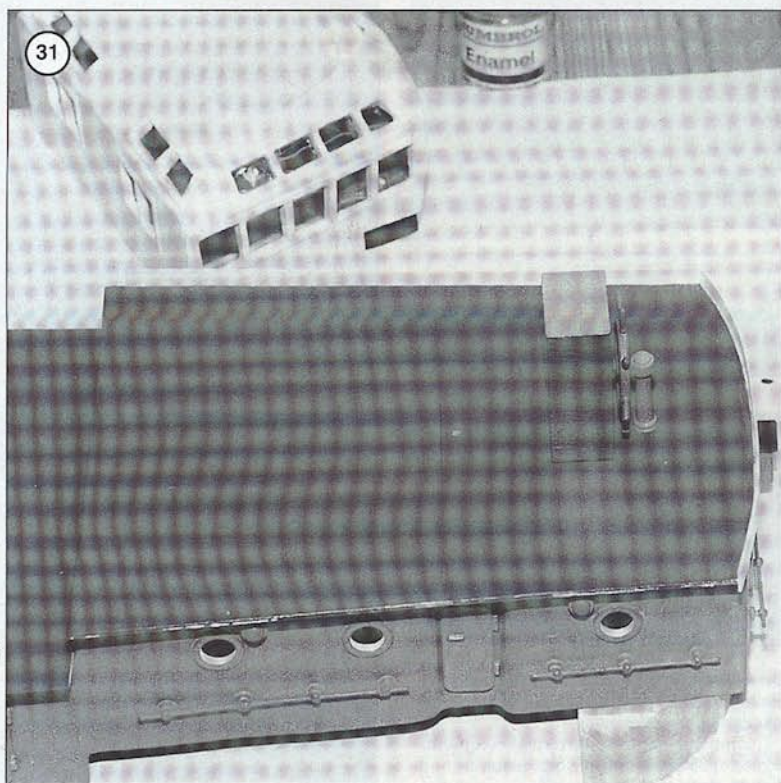
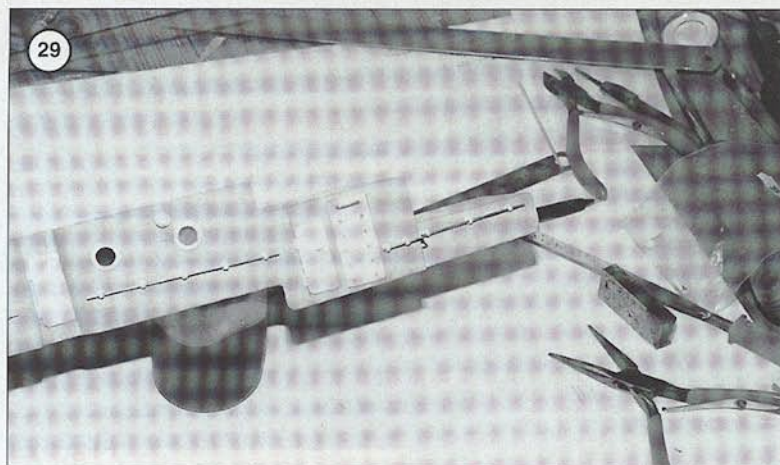
assembly stuck in place.

The decks were now stuck in place on the main superstructure, with a cut-out to suit the position of the ladder at the side of the superstructure. The wheelhouse was offered into position and the location for the ship's wheel determined. This was duly stuck into place, Photo 31, and the wheelhouse, complete with its fittings (searchlight, Klaxon, vents, etc.) was stuck into position, Photo 32.

I bought some 0.030 x 0.250in strip styrene to edge the superstructure decks with and made up the joining pieces from plastic card, drawing around a suitable container for the correct radius, Photo 33. These were glued into place after painting with Humbrol Satin White 130 and cut to suit the cut-out for the ladder, Photo 34.

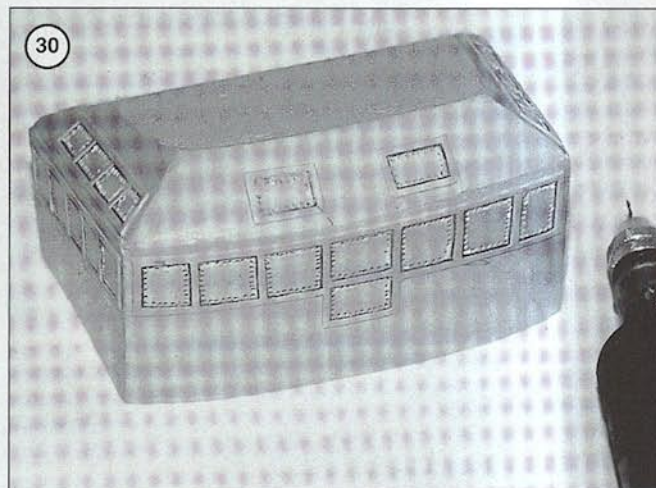
Holes were drilled as required for the various deck fittings and the stanchions fitted. Brass wire was used again for the rails. When complete, the railings were painted in situ, Photo 35.





The funnel was tackled next. The two halves were cut out from the vac-forming and trimmed by rubbing on a sheet of fine sand paper on a flat surface. The two halves were stuck using Revell Contacta Professional with a reinforcing strip of plastic off-cut and a piece of plastic tube at the curved part, Photo 36. The top was cut out of plastic off-cut and trimmed to fit. Holes were drilled to take the exhaust vent and mast. The main mast and rear mast were made up with their fittings and painted, Photo 37.

The funnel was trimmed to fit to the rear of the wheelhouse and painted. After gluing in place the masts and rigging were fitted. The rope reeling winch was completed and fitted as was the tow hook assembly. The dinghy was made up with the vac-formed hull and white metal thwarts and fitted onto the chocks with the outboard and fuel tank. Any remaining fittings were now glued in place and the superstructure fixed to the hull, Photo 38. This now completed the construction of the boat, all that remained was to install



the radio, speed controller and batteries and ballast the model.

Floating in the bath it was obvious that weight was required alongside the drive motor and towards the stern. Lead sheeting was used, held in place with silicone sealant.

### Trials

The boat handled extremely well, turning in tight circles with the help of the Kort nozzle. I had some concerns over its stability with the top weight of the fibreglass wheelhouse and superstructure but these were misplaced as it stood up well to gusts of wind experienced on exposed waters.

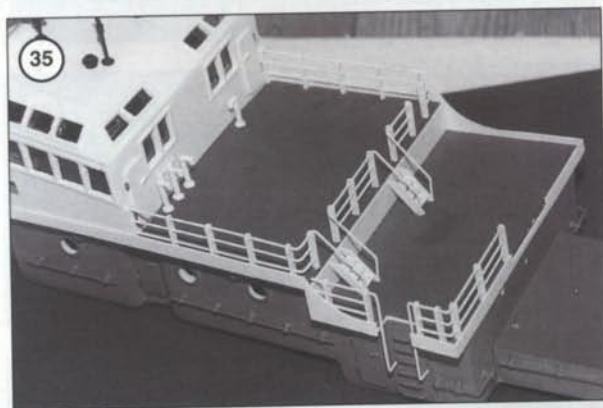
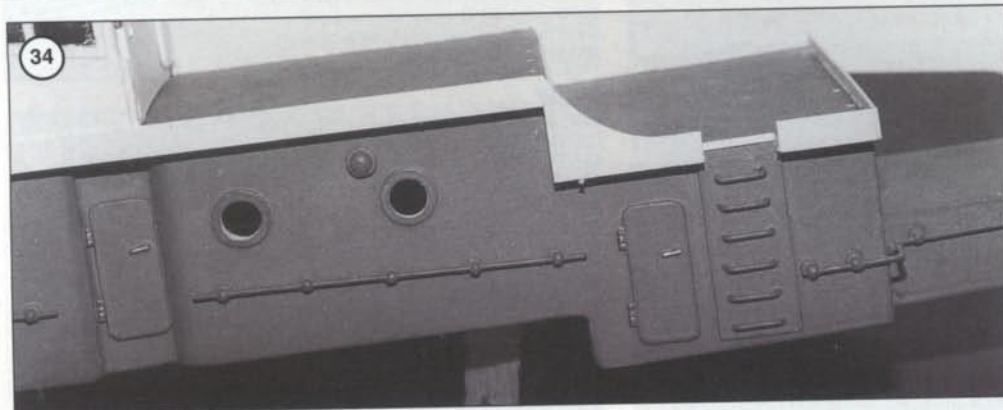
Since completing the model, some finishing detail has been applied. The yellow (broken) line under the handrail has been added, draught marks have been applied (Letraset) and the propeller has been changed. The original prop was made of white metal and to prevent excessive wear on the propshaft bearings it requires balancing. I substituted a brass prop of the same size.

I am now at the point where I am about to add the vessel's name and port of registry. It would have been a nice touch if these details had been included in the kit as they are shown on the photographs (with the exception of the draught marks.) Photo 39 shows mine.

With the exception of the adhesives mentioned previously, thick Superglue (Ripmax) was used for the majority of the construction. The radio equipment was Futaba 40MHz using an Electronize speed controller which gives very effective and



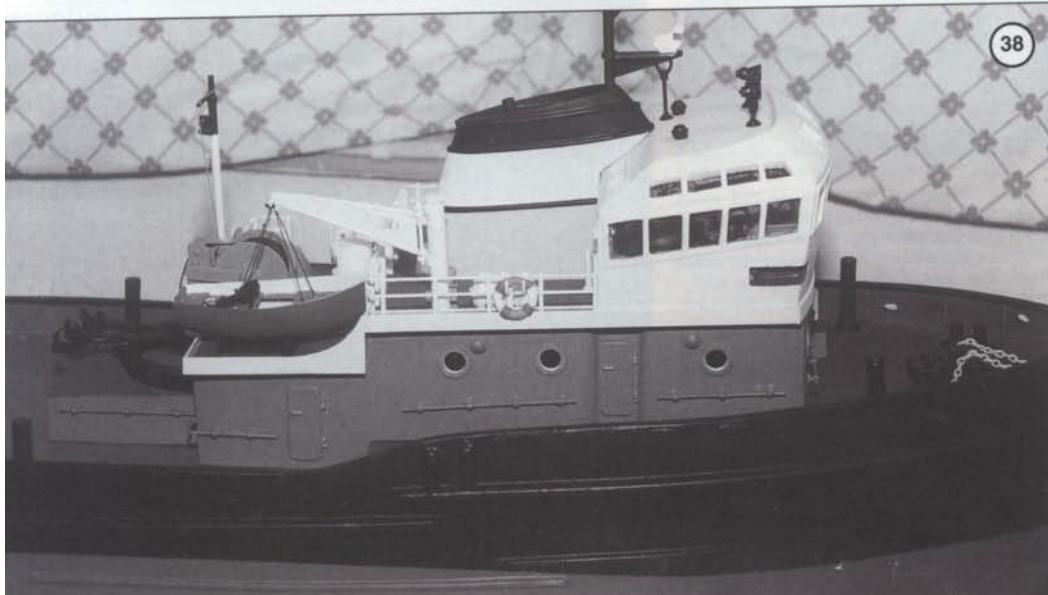
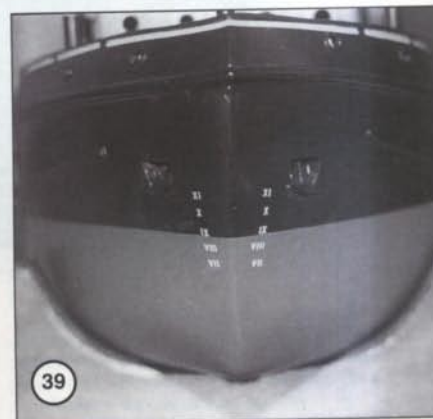
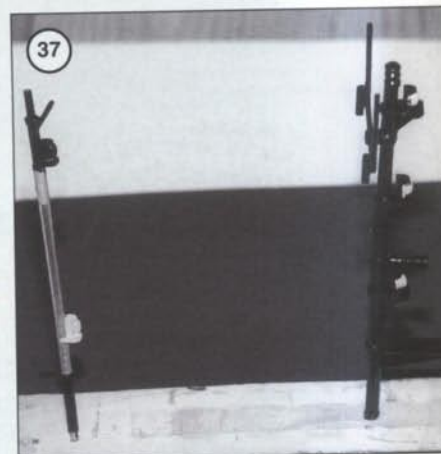




progressive forward and reverse control. Paints used were from the Humbrol range except where specified.

In conclusion, the Active makes up into a model 25.5in long by 7.5in beam, a handy size for transportation.

I was disappointed with the hull, which wasn't of the quality I would have expected, and the wheelhouse moulding had uneven windows on each side and differed across the front. I understand from Mount Fleet Models that the wheelhouse moulding is to be changed. I used plastic card in some areas which is a considerable saving in labour to prepare compared to wood and the difference in cost must be minimal. The white metal fittings and other materials supplied were fine.



Value for money? - at under £150 it's not bad. The kit of the Active can be obtained directly from Mount Fleet Models, Laurel Mount, Holmfirth Road, Meltham, Huddersfield, HD7 3DA. Tel: 01484 851569.

